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NIGHT BELL.

TALES OF THE TOWN.



I WAS dining out last Sunday, and incidentally the host remarked that he intended to make his son, a young man of seventeen or eighteen, a lawyer. The young man, I do not believe, will ever distinguish himself at the bar. He does not give promise of unusual powers as a conversationalist, something very essential to success as a lawyer. At school, I am told, he never excited comment by having his lessons better, or even as well, as his classmates; and yet his father is going to damn his future by placing him at the study and practice of a profession in which these things are the only indications we have of ultimate success. Far better would it be for that father to encourage his son to learn a trade than swell the ranks of a profession already overcrowded, and in which success can only be determined by the survival of the fittest.

In the east, a leading writer says that much of the overcrowding of the professions is due in a great measure to the one-horse university system, which by lowering the standard of graduation, as it invariably does, tempts into learned professions a number of youths whose calling is agriculture or trade. The remedy is to establish a higher university standard than now exists. The number of those who graduate at present is too large for the intellectual labor market, and the result is a glut, which will be aggravated if women enter the professions. Convocation orators talk as if it ought to be the great object of our aspirations to extend university education to every farmer and mechanic in the land, and unthinking audiences applaud the

noble sentiment. Experience proves that youths who have been at college, even at an agricultural college, never go back to farm or to the store.

A showy and pretentious system of public education has also a good deal to answer for, though rather in the way of overcrowding the cities than the professions. It is the reputed system of the Jews to teach every boy, no matter what may be the condition of his family, some handicraft on which he can fall back, in the last resort, as the means of earning his bread. The custom is not unworthy of imitation; it might save graduates, for whose intellectual labor there is no market, from helpless destitution or worse. I do not wish that anything in this should be construed as meaning that I am opposed to the establishment of a university in Victoria. In a previous issue I gave several reasons why a scheme for a first-class university should be supported; it is only to the one-horse university that I object, where a first-class education cannot be secured, and in which a young man learns just enough to be of no use to him.

Sir Edwin Arnold, K C.I.E., C.S.I., poet, philosopher, linguist, oriental scholar and journalist, is now making an extensive lecturing tour of the United States. Sir Edwin is well known from his connection with the London press, and, consequently, anything he may say with regard to the profession of journalism will be accepted as worthy of more than ordinary consideration. He says that the average editorial leader in an English newspaper is the product of three hours of diligent work by an accomplished man—such as Andrew Lang, for instance. He himself once wrote one of 2,000 words with a lead pencil in an hour—a rate of speed which seems prodigious, and which a crack American reporter, writing against time, could hardly excel; but a man who has written 8,000 leaders, as the author of "The Light of Asia" has done, must necessarily have become expert at it.

As affording an illustration of how great minds occasionally differ it might be said that Sir Edwin thinks that the reporter should be rated on a level with the editor, and that, personally, he would as soon report a fire as to inter-